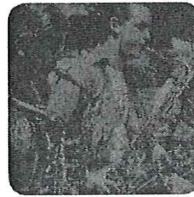


CD 2006--68-69

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO FACULTY OF MUSIC



2006-2007 SEASON

WHERE GREAT MINDS MEET GREAT MUSIC

Friday, October 13, 2006
7:30 pm. MacMillan Theatre

University of Toronto Faculty of Music
presents

University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra
Raffi Armenian, conductor

PROGRAM

Maurice Ravel

Rapsodie Espagnole
Prelude a la nuit
Malaguena
Habanera
Feria

Frank Martin

Ballade for Flute and Orchestra
Esther Choi, Flute

Claude Debussy

Première Rhapsody for Clarinet and Orchestra
Cecilia Kang, Clarinet

INTERMISSION

César Franck

Symphony in D minor, Op. 48
Lento - Allegro non troppo
Allegretto
Allegro non troppo

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Program Notes

Rapsodie espagnole

MAURICE RAVEL (1875-1937)

Spain inspired three of the four works Ravel composed in 1907: a *Vocalise-Étude*, itself derived from his one-act opera *l'Heure espagnole*, and *Rapsodie espagnole*. The *Rapsodie* was premiered in March 1908 and drew a mixed reaction: a cool response from the boxes and orchestra seats; cheers from the galleries. But legend has it that the French composer Florent Schmitt settled the matter in favour of Ravel when he cried out from the galleries: "Play it once more for those below who have not understood!"

In four movements, the third, a "Habanera," is an orchestration of part of Ravel's *Sites auriculaires* for two pianos (1895-7). But since the remaining movements are neither arrangements nor based on a programme, *Rapsodie* is considered Ravel's first entirely orchestral work. The first movement, "Prélude à la nuit" (Prelude to the Night), with muted strings and shimmering textures, is dominated by a four-note ostinato (F-E-D-C-sharp) that defies both metre and modulation. The ponderous mood is twice enlivened by cadenzas for pairs of clarinets and bassoons respectively. The second movement is a "Malagueña," a dance in the flamenco style, that features a solo english horn and, at the end, the return of the four-note motif. The "Habanera," a nineteenth-century Cuban song and dance form popular in Spain and Europe, is the only movement without the four-note motif. In its place, it has its own rhythmic ostinato, and unfolds very slowly. The finale, "Feria" (Fair), sparkles with excitement—the despondent english horn solo in the middle is but a minor intrusion into the otherwise festive mood. Its unusual sounds have been compared to the squeaky wheels and mechanical clockwork of fairground machinery.

At the premiere of the two-piano version of the "Habanera" in March 1898, De-

bussy asked Ravel to lend him the score. It is not hard, then, to imagine Ravel's consternation when Debussy unveiled his "Soirée dans Grenade" complete with a habanera rhythm and harmonies clashing against an insistent C-sharp, exactly as in Ravel's "Habanera." And so when Ravel published his *Rapsodie*, he made a point of inscribing "1895" above the "Habanera" movement—to leave no doubt as to who got there first.

Ballade for flute and orchestra

FRANK MARTIN (1890-1974)

Martin originally composed this ballade for flute and piano; it was premiered in Geneva in September 1939. But two months later, the conductor Ernest Ansermet, a long-time collaborator of the composer, conducted his own orchestration in both Lausanne and Geneva. The work begins mysteriously, its uncertainty quickly rising to an agitated state underscored by an ostinato in the orchestra. The momentum culminates in a lengthy flute cadenza. The subdued return of the accompaniment is breathtaking: its initial calm anticipates another build-up to a turbulent state that in this instance propels the work to an assertive close. The dramatic sweep is characteristic of the narrative style associated with the instrumental ballade, first used by Chopin and later by Franck, Liszt and Brahms. Although instrumental ballades are typically for piano, Martin helped expand the genre with his handful of ballades for solo instruments and piano or chamber orchestra (flute, trombone, piano, saxophone, cello and viola). A Swiss composer, pianist and conductor, Martin developed a unique musical language rooted in an extended tonal idiom into which he fused limited twelve-tone elements. A prolific composer who wrote in a wide variety of genres, Martin lived his last two decades in the Netherlands.

Première rapsodie for clarinet and orchestra

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862-1918)

Upon his appointment to the Paris Conservatoire by Fauré, one of Debussy's first duties was to adjudicate the woodwind competitions. For the 1910 clarinet competition, he composed two pieces: a short sight-reading test piece entitled *Petite Pièce*; and *Première rapsodie* for clarinet and piano that the candidates were to prepare in advance. Two days before the competition, Debussy wrote to his editor: "On Sunday, you should feel sorry for me; I will have to hear the *Rapsodie* for clarinet in B-flat played eleven times. I will tell you all about it if I am still alive." The *Rapsodie* received its first concert performance in January 1911 by Prosper Mimart, the Conservatoire professor to whom the work is dedicated. Calling the work "one of the most pleasing I have ever written," Debussy orchestrated it that summer. Featuring evocative timbres, sharp contrasts in moods and an improvisatory character, *Rapsodie* opens tentatively. The clarinet then unveils a seductive and slowly unfolding melody accompanied by gentle rhythmic ostinati in the orchestra. A sudden outburst briefly interrupts the meditative atmosphere—the alternation between serene lyricism and agitated declamation defines much of what follows. The work culminates in a virtuosic display that leads to a rousing close.

Symphony in D minor

CÉSAR FRANCK (1822-1890)

Implored by his faithful followers (known as the *bande à Franck*, they included Vincent d'Indy) to compose a symphony, Franck completed his only mature work in the genre in 1888, two years before his death. First performed at the Paris Conservatoire in February 1889, it was not particularly well received. A fellow Conservatoire colleague, for one, was offended by the second-movement English horn solo because the prominent use of the instrument in a

symphony was unusual and, according to this logic, inappropriate (he evidently forgot about Haydn's use of two English horns in his Symphony No. 22 "The Philosopher"). Time has been more generous with Franck's symphonic effort, today the most often performed French symphony second only to Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*.

Grand in scope, Franck's symphony seems rooted in classical tradition and yet in crucial respects it charts new territory. For one, it is cast in three- rather than the standard four-movement structure. And as Donald Tovey observed, its often improvisatory manner suggests the narrative sweep and pace of a symphonic poem rather than the fast-paced momentum of a Classical symphony. Moreover, the importance Franck places on cyclic design, i.e. the borrowing of music from earlier movements into later movements—a favourite device—confirms its progressive credentials.

The first movement begins with a stately *Lento* that gradually crescendos into an *Allegro non troppo* drawn on the same material but now played faster. The new tempo, however, is short-lived—the *Lento* returns and the process is repeated in a new key. When the *Allegro* is reached a second time, it is followed by the declamatory second-group themes (regarding these, Debussy exclaimed: "What smart ideas!")

The symphony has no slow movement or lively scherzo as such. Instead, its central movement blends both into a sort of slow dance. "The wisdom of the serpent is foreign to the harmlessness of the dove," wrote Tovey about this hybrid movement, "and the combination has an exotic glamour all its own." The *Allegretto* opens with unhurried harp and pizzicato strings over which is unfurled the "notorious" English horn melody. The violas soon join in a countermelody after which a solo horn takes over.

The finale, according to Tovey a "festsive, effective and leisurely" *Allegro non troppo*, begins with a jolly theme in the bassoons. It is in this movement, particularly in the coda, that the cyclic design comes

to fruition with the transformed reprise of themes from both previous movements. For David Cox, the symphony's grand arc calls for one of several possible interpretations: "an affirmation of faith after doubt and perplexity, or a message of triumph

over adversity, or indeed the triumph of good over evil."

Notes by Robert Rival, doctoral candidate in composition in the Faculty of Music
www.robertrival.com

Biographies

Maestro **Raffi Armenian** graduated from the piano performance class of Bruno Seidlhofer at the Academy of Music in Vienna, Austria. He further studied at Imperial College, University of London, England, before completing his studies at the Vienna Academy of Music with Hans Swarowsky (orchestral conducting), Rheinhold Schmid (choral conducting) and Alfred Uhl (composition). He also took private voice lessons with Ferdinand Grossmann.

In 1969 Raffi Armenian immigrated to Canada, where he became Artistic Director of the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony for 22 years. The Raffi Armenian Theatre in Kitchener, which he helped to design, is considered one of the best performance spaces in North America, both for its acoustics and its design features. In 1974, as Music Director of the Stratford Festival, he founded the Canadian Chamber Ensemble, which achieved international recognition with tours in North and South America, and Europe.

Raffi Armenian has guest conducted all of the major orchestras in Canada, as well as in Belgium, Italy, the United States, and the Jeunesses Musicales World Youth Orchestra. Equally at home on the operatic podium, he has conducted productions in Toronto, Montreal, Detroit, Columbus and Indiana, in a vast repertoire, including Berg's *Wozzeck* for the Canadian Opera Company, Toronto, and Stravinsky's *Rake's Progress*. From 1982 to 1985 he was Artistic Director of the Opera Studio of Opera de Montreal. In 1989, he conducted the final public appearance of the great Canadian tenor Jon Vickers, in a concert performance of Wagner's *Parsifal*. In March 2006, he led the University of Toronto Opera Division in four

performances of *The Marriage of Figaro* by Mozart.

Raffi Armenian's work has received countless honors including the Canadian Grand Prix du Disque for *Serenades*, and an Emmy Award nomination for the TV performance of Menotti's *The Medium* starring Maureen Forrester. Woody Allen used his CD *Music from Berlin in the 1920s* as background music for his film *Shadows and Fog*. He is a recipient of Honorary Doctorates from the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University, and the Golden Jubilee Medal of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. In 1989 he was invested into the Order of Canada.

Raffi Armenian has long been active as a pedagogue. In 1981 he became a Professor of the Orchestral Conducting Class in addition to conducting the Orchestra at the Conservatoire de Musique in Montreal, a position he continues to hold. In 1997 he accepted a two-year post as Visiting Guest Professor at the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst, in Graz, Austria, and since September 1999 Mr. Armenian has been Director of Orchestral Studies at the University of Toronto.

Esther H. Choi is a student of Susan Hoepfner majoring in flute performance at the University of Toronto. She began playing piano at the age of 4 and the flute in the Royal Conservatory of Music at the age of 12; she plays ARCT level repertoire on both instruments. Winner of two silver medals for obtaining the highest marks at the RCM examinations, Ms. Choi has also won many competitions and represented Ontario at the National Music Festival in 2005. Ms. Choi has performed in master classes for Julius Baker, Louis Moyse, Peter Lloyd, Emmanuel Pahud, Jeanne Bax-

tresser, Robert Langevin. She has attended summer sessions including Domaine Forget and Orford Arts Centre (2004, 2006). She has played in several orchestras since the age of 16, and is an avid performer of new music with several new works dedicated to her. Ms. Choi frequently gives recitals and concerts in Toronto as a soloist with several ensembles including the Toronto Senior Strings. Ms. Choi is interested in Toronto's musical history and hopes to one day become a recording artist.

Clarinetist **Cecilia Kang** has been featured as a soloist with the North Toronto Collegiate Institute Orchestra, the Cathedral Bluffs Symphony Orchestra, and the Guelph Symphony Orchestra. In 2005-2006, she toured across Canada with the National Youth Orchestra under the direction of Maestro Jacques Lacombe. As a chamber musician, Cecilia has collaborated with Scott St. John, Judy Loman, the St. Lawrence String Quartet, and members

from the Toronto Philharmonia and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

She has received top prizes and honors from the Canadian Music Competitions, the Kiwanis Music Festival, the Banff Centre for the Arts, the Aria International Academy, the Orford Center for the Arts, the King-sway Foundation, the Alliance for Canadian New Music Projects, and the Embassy of the Republic of Korea.

After earning a Bachelor of Music degree at the University of Toronto in 2006, she is currently pursuing a Master's degree in clarinet performance at the University of Southern California under the tutelage of Yehuda Gilad. She has also studied with Joseph Orlowski, Avrahm Galper, Daniel Gilbert, Mark Nuccio, Max Christie, Joaquin Valdepeñas and Zeng-Ming Liao.

This evening, Cecilia would like to express her personal appreciation to the Kang Family and the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto for all their support.

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James Campbell, clarinet
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Sandra Wu
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Violin II

Kenin McKay, *principal*
Matthew Chan
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Michelle Lee
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Jacques
Sarah Steeves
Amber Walton-Amar

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Calvin Marks, *principal*
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Callum Jennings
Brian Kobayakawa
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Stephen Kreuger
Ben Whiteley

Flute

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Oboe

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Julia Stroud

Alto Saxophone

Tristan De Borba

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Lance McMillan
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